

# **Michigan's School-To-Registered Apprenticeship Program**

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## Michigan's School-to-Registered Apprenticeship (STRA) Program

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### General Information

#### **What is STRA?**

STRA stands for Michigan's "**School-to-Registered Apprenticeship**" Program. This program offers high school students the opportunity to receive long-term career and occupational education and training both in the classroom and at a job site. Employers work with school counselors, instructors, and a STRA Program Coordinator to give interested students the chance to interview for specific job openings they have available. **Paid job site training** begins while a student is in high school and, upon graduation, continues with **guaranteed full-time employment** and **employer-paid college instruction**.

**Michigan's Career Preparation System** emphasizes the need for students to get career and occupational information, perform activities that allow career exploration, and investigate all appropriate career education, training, and employment options. While most students are aware of the more traditional school education and training opportunities such as 4-year college, military, and technical school training, student apprenticeship training is new and very unfamiliar. However, the shortage of "skilled" individuals nationwide has put programs such as the STRA Program into the spotlight.

This career and occupational training program is modeled after the federal apprenticeship program and offers many benefits to participating students and employers.

On the pages that follow, you will find STRA Program information for students, parents, employers, teachers, and counselors, as well as specific program information addressing the following topics:

- ❑ The Apprenticeship System of Training
- ❑ STRA and Michigan's Career Preparation System
- ❑ Program Benefits and Commitments
- ❑ Student and Employer Participation Requirements
- ❑ The STRA Program Student "Selection Process"
- ❑ Student Apprentice Summer and School Year Program Activities
- ❑ Program Completion and National Credentials
- ❑ Career Pathways: Apprenticeable Occupations
- ❑ Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit
- ❑ Education Training Programs and Youth Labor Laws
- ❑ Risk Management

## **The Apprenticeship System of Training**

Apprenticeship programs have been in existence for many years. Practiced mostly in Europe, the term “apprenticeship” is used to describe the idea of a professional teaching a skill or occupation to another individual. Training in this manner helped to ensure a continued pool of qualified candidates for many different occupations. Over time, training programs became more structured and formal, and included classroom instruction. **Program Standards** were developed by employers as a means of designating tasks or skills to be learned at the job site, and what classes must be completed for an individual to be successful in a specific career or occupation.

Apprenticeship programs have gained momentum in the United States due mostly to the lack of skilled individuals available to the nation’s employers. The steady increase in the popularity of apprenticeship programs, especially with high school students, can be attributed to the fact that parents and students recognize the need for more viable post–high school career training options that include occupational training while still in high school, assistance in paying for college, and guaranteed full-time, gainful employment upon completion of high school that includes benefits and continued education, training, and employment opportunities.

The apprenticeship system of training is unique in that it is the only formal, structured, and nationally recognized education and training program available that combines the two most common forms of career and occupational learning:

- **Classroom Instruction**
- **On-the-Job Training**

Apprentices not only learn occupational skills in the classroom; their learning is expanded to include **paid on-the-job training**.

The School-to-Registered Apprenticeship (STRA) Program was developed to allow high school students the opportunity to participate in apprenticeship training as a part of their high school classroom activities. Students wishing to be considered for participation in a STRA Program must be at least 16 years of age and a third-year (junior) student in high school.

**As early as their junior year, students can be apprenticed, participating in technical instruction, and receiving paid, on-the-job training during normal school hours.**

Based on each student candidate’s application, portfolio, assessment information, and interview performance, participating employers choose who they wish to sponsor for specific occupations within their business. Student apprentices are required to complete a pre-determined number of hours of classroom instruction as well as on-the-job training. During the senior year, a student apprentice’s classroom instruction may be provided by the local high school or technical school. A portion of the student’s school day also may be spent performing paid, on-the-job tasks at the

work site. Upon graduation, classroom instruction is continued at the local community college or other designated post-high school instruction deliverer. All on-the-job training is supplied by the sponsoring employer both during high school, and, upon graduation, as a full-time employee with the sponsoring business.

Each student participant is registered with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, and all classroom and work site training hours are recorded and kept on file until the student completes all program classroom and work site training hours. Program length, usually between 2000 and 8000 hours, takes anywhere from two to five years to complete, depending on the occupation and the employer. Upon successful completion of all program hours, an apprentice receives a "Certificate of Completion" from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. These credentials, recognized by professionals in the industry nationwide, verify the individual's status as quality trained and highly skilled.

**Students who complete STRA Programs have experienced high-quality academic and occupational education, have received technical training with employment, and have been awarded national credentials ensuring immediate and future gainful education, employment, and career opportunities.**

### **STRA Program Student Information**

The STRA Program provides occupational education and training to students by combining paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction. It is important that, as a student, you get information about the STRA Program so you can determine if this system of occupational training is the right one for you.

If you're a student who is at least 16 years of age, a high school junior or senior, and someone who wants:

- To have an occupation and career plan in place prior to graduation,
- To be well prepared for post-high school education and training opportunities prior to graduation,
- To get a head start on your career, receiving **technical classroom instruction** and hands-on, **paid, job site training**,
- To be **guaranteed full-time employment** upon graduation, including livable wages and **guaranteed wage increases**,
- To get **employment benefits**, including health and life insurance, vacation and sick time, and 401Ks,
- To receive occupational and technical instruction at the local community college **with the employer paying a portion or all of tuition and fees**,
- To receive **nationally recognized credentials** upon program completion from the U.S. Department of Labor that will identify you as a professional in your occupation, and
- To have **lifelong education, employment, and career opportunities . . .**

**... then you need to know more about Michigan's STRA Program!**

To learn about STRA, be sure to review the following STRA Program information:

- **The Apprenticeship System of Training**
- **STRA and Michigan's Career Preparation System**
- **Program Benefits and Commitments**
- **Student and Employer Program Participation Requirements**
- **The STRA Program Student "Selection Process"**
- **Student Apprentice Summer & School Year Program Activities**
- **Program Completion & Nationally Recognized Credentials**
- **Career Pathways - Apprenticeable Occupations and Careers**

### **Employer Information**

This section provides important information about the STRA Program, and why this program may be able to assist you in your present and future hiring and training needs.

Employers all over the country today are having difficulty finding trained individuals for many different occupations, as well as those who possess the work habits needed for success in employment and in life.

**As an Employer, a STRA Program can assist you by:**

- Providing you with the opportunity to "grow your own" job candidates by contributing to and building a training plan that includes input in designing classroom instruction as well as job site training;
- Helping you find highly motivated individuals to train who have participated in **career preparation** activities including:
  - Researching and exploring career options and opportunities,
  - Developing an occupation and career plan,
  - Demonstrating the appropriate background, ability, work habits, and interest in successfully pursuing a career pathway with your company;
- Allowing you to use the current educational system to provide job site training during classroom time;
- Providing access to a continuous pool of qualified applicants for training and entry-level employment opportunities; and
- Making you eligible for Michigan's Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit, which allows a \$2000 tax credit for every student apprentice you employ at your business.

**Employers Who Participate in STRA Programs:**

- Provide input regarding industry standards and student occupational education and training, including the development of **Occupational Standards**, your customized occupational training plan producing individuals who are uniquely skilled to meet the needs of your business;
- Utilize STRA Coordinators to recruit interested students from local high schools for possible program participation;

- Understand that interested students must complete a series of activities to qualify for an interview, including application completion, parent orientation, testing, business tours, and a pre-interview workshop;
- Conduct interviews with those students who have indicated an interest in job openings and have completed all Selection Process activities;
- Understand that the employer's program commitment is to interview students and select only students who meet the employer's hiring requirements and expectations;
- Provide paid "On-the-Job Training" to students while in high school, and, upon graduation, provide full-time employment and community college tuition;
- Work closely with the student, parents, classroom instructors, counselors, and STRA Program Coordinator to help ensure the student's program success and support program activities and goals.

**Want to know more? Get more specific details about the STRA Program by reviewing the information on the topics listed below, and see why it may be the answer to many of your hiring needs.**

- **The Apprenticeship System of Training**
- **STRA and Michigan's Career Preparation System**
- **Program Benefits and Commitments**
- **Student and Employer Program Participation Requirements**
- **The STRA Program Student "Selection Process"**
- **Student Apprentice Summer & School Year Program Activities**
- **Program Completion and Nationally Recognized Credentials**
- **Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit**
- **Career Pathways – Apprenticeable Careers and Occupations**
- **Education Training Programs and Youth Labor Laws**
- **Risk Management**

### **Teacher/Counselor Information**

This section provides high school and post-high school instructors and counselors with important information about the STRA Program and explains why it is critical for those in education to be able to present program information to students when discussing high school and post-high school education and training options.

Those in education are already aware of the "skilled" labor shortage many businesses are experiencing throughout the U.S. This shortage affects a very large number of employers representing a variety of industries and occupations.

Michigan's Career Preparation System focuses on activities that help students plan and prepare for today's occupations and careers, including:

- Career exploration, awareness, and decision making,
- Applied academics and coursework in a real-world context,
- Up-to-date technology skill training in the classroom and in a workplace setting,

- High school and post-high school education and training opportunities and options to successfully reach occupational and career goals, including life-long education, training, and employment opportunities.

While academics are most certainly key to a student's future career plans, the majority of available employment opportunities do require post-high school education and training, but not necessarily the four- to five-year college degree. Many high-skill, high-wage positions with good benefits require individuals who possess:

- Good core academics and high-quality technical skill training, and
- Good work ethics, as demonstrated by good attendance, quality work, and responsibility.

While a large number of students begin a 4-5 year degree program, only 20% or fewer actually finish. Those who do complete may find it difficult to secure degree-related employment due to lack of experience. **It is clear that the most successful means of career training combines classroom instruction with “on-the-job” training.**

#### **STRA Programs:**

- Provide high school and post-high school program activities that **combine career and occupational classroom instruction with paid, on-the-job training,**
- Are highly structured and formalized. **Instructional curriculum and job-site training plans** are developed by the employer, the high school staff, and the post-high school technical instructional staff. These plans provide detailed information regarding tasks to be learned and the number of hours to be spent on each task.
- Invite and encourage all interested students to apply regardless of academic performance, work experience, or financial means. By completing all activities in the program **“Selection Process,”** students become eligible for interviews with sponsoring employers.
- Work with employers, who provide student apprentices, upon graduation, with **guaranteed full-time employment, including benefits and guaranteed wage increases.**
- Require student participants to continue classroom instruction at the local community college, with the **employer paying a portion or all of the tuition and fees.**
- **Provide training for more than 800 careers and occupations,** requiring anywhere from two to five years to complete, whereupon the student receives a **“Certificate of Completion”** from the U.S. Department of Labor. These credentials identify an individual as “highly skilled” and recognized by industry professionals nationwide.

High school instructors and counselors can present this program as one of the best post-high school options available to students today.

Learn more about the STRA Program by reviewing the information provided on the program topics listed below:

- **The Apprenticeship System of Training**
- **STRA and Michigan's Career Preparation System**
- **Program Benefits and Commitments**

- **Student and Employer Participation Requirements**
- **The STRA Program Student “Selection Process”**
- **Student Apprentice Summer & School Year Program Activities**
- **Program Completion and Nationally Recognized Credentials**
- **Career Pathways – Apprenticeable Careers and Occupations**

### **Parent Information**

**Career preparation** is essential for education, training, and employment success. Parents play a critical role in helping their children explore different careers, develop a career plan, and select appropriate high school and post-high school occupational education and training options. To be effective in assisting your student in career preparation and planning, you need to know about all the available opportunities.

#### **As a Parent:**

- You can help your child develop a career plan through **career research and exploration**.
- You can review, consider, and **select the education and training options** that are the most suitable and **provide the greatest benefit for the lowest cost**.
- You want to know that your child will be able to be **self-sufficient and economically independent** in a career or occupation that will ensure continued and advanced career education, training, and employment opportunities.
- You may want to consider the **element of paid, “hands-on” experience** as a critical component of successful occupational training.
- You are aware of the ever-increasing expense involved in the 4-5 year college track, and you are **searching for quality education and training alternatives that can ensure your child life-long education, career, and employment success**.

**The STRA Program offers student participants an occupational training opportunity that combines high school and post-high school classroom instruction with paid job site training. Upon graduation, employer sponsors guarantee students full-time employment, including guaranteed wage increases and benefits and at least a portion of the student’s post-high school technical instruction costs.**

Parents can look forward to their students:

- Receiving high-quality classroom and job site training in high-skill, high-wage occupations, beginning in high school.
- Graduating from high school with guaranteed full-time, self-supporting employment that includes benefits.
- Continuing classroom instruction at the community college with the employer paying a portion or all of the tuition and fees.

**For more specific information about the STRA Program, be sure to review the following information:**

- The Apprenticeship System of Training



- STRA and Michigan's Career Preparation System
- Program Benefits and Commitments
- Student and Employer Program Participation Requirements
- The STRA Program Student "Selection Process"
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- Program Completion and Nationally Recognized Credentials
- Career Pathways – Apprenticeable Careers and Occupations

### **STRA Program Benefits and Commitments**

#### **Benefits:**

##### To the Employer:

- ❑ Access to future skilled workers.
- ❑ Input into the training program.
- ❑ A structured training process for all employers.
- ❑ A comprehensive outreach and assessment program.
- ❑ Ability to select students for the program.
- ❑ Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit to help pay education and training expenses.

##### To the Student:

- ❑ A career path that includes training and a quality job.
- ❑ A program that links education to work.
- ❑ Paid postsecondary education.
- ❑ National credentials.
- ❑ A career path to a four-year degree, if desired.

##### To the Parent:

- ❑ The student is on a quality career path with a clear goal.
- ❑ No college debt.
- ❑ No returning home without a job at the end of the program; employment is guaranteed.
- ❑ Both students and parents can be proud of the results.

##### To the Schools:

- ❑ A quality choice for students.
- ❑ The opportunity to upgrade the curriculum to meet employer standards.
- ❑ A program that links schools to businesses within the community.
- ❑ A pathway to continued education and training opportunities.
- ❑ A key component in economic development.

#### **Commitments:**

##### From Employers:

- Commitment to hire student up front.
- Long-term commitment to employ.
- Commitment to structure jobs within the business.
- Commitment to pay student's tuition through the apprenticeship program.
- Commitment of time to develop program and mentor student.

From Students:

- Commitment to complete Selection Process Activities.
- Commitment to work 6-8 weeks during the summer between junior and senior year.
- Commitment to continue employment, education, and training during and after senior year.
- Commitment to prioritize senior year activities as necessary to include STRA Program training.

From School:

- Work with employers to provide training they desire.
- Develop articulation program with community college.
- Commit high-quality staff to coordinate program.
- Develop an aggressive outreach and assessment program.

From Parents:

- Learn about program and expectations of students who participate.
- Support student during Selection Process.
- Be available to assist student in completing activities.
- Provide support, encouragement, and cooperation if student is selected.

### **STRA Program Student Participation Requirements**

Students wishing to be considered for STRA Program participation must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Be at least 16 years of age and have a sincere interest in the occupation or career.
- Be enrolled in a local high school, an alternative or adult education program, or a home-school program.
- Be of junior- or senior-year status and on track for graduation.
- Be physically and mentally capable of performing the tasks and duties of the occupation or career.
- Meet all employer pre-hiring and hiring requirements, including completing all paperwork and successfully passing a drug test and/or physical.
- Complete all STRA Program and Bureau of Apprenticeship & Training paperwork, provide any requested documentation, and secure appropriate signatures, including parent signatures when applicable.
- Have access to reliable transportation to and from the work site in the summer and during the school year.
- Be available a minimum of 6 weeks during the summer for participation in initial classroom instruction and the Summer Work Experience.
- Meet all local school and/or technical school work-based learning participation requirements.
- Maintain an “on-time for graduation” status at all times.
- Agree to abide by all STRA Program, Bureau of Apprenticeship & Training, technical school, and local school rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.

In addition, employers prefer candidates who:

- Have a serious desire to become a professional in a specific occupation or career.
- Exhibit a willingness to work hard to achieve educational, employment, occupational, and career goals.
- Have had some occupational classroom instruction and/or work experience.
- Have shown satisfactory academic and technical classroom progress and performance.
- Have exhibited good work habits and the ability to follow directions and complete assignments.
- Are committed to doing quality work in a timely manner.

### **Employer Program Participation Requirements**

Employers wishing to be considered for the STRA Program must meet the following minimum requirements:

- The business must have training personnel who have appropriate and sufficient experience and are capable of properly training an apprentice.
- The ratio of professionals to apprentices provides for proper supervision, training, and safety.
- The training facility and equipment must be up-to-date, in working order, and safe.
- Apprentices must receive proper safety training.
- The business must comply with all state and federal employment and training laws, rules, policies, and regulations.
- The employer must provide and include *Compliance with EEO Laws* with all Occupational Standards.
- Employers with more than five apprentices must also adopt a written affirmative action plan.

In addition, careers and occupations offered by a business or employer must be **apprenticeable**. **An Apprenticeable Occupation or Career is defined by the requirements listed below:**

- It is a high-skill, high-quality, high-wage occupation or career.
- It is an occupation or career with systematic, continual, and progressive occupational task mastery based upon previous task competency achievement, resulting in the individual eventually obtaining the status of “professional” for that specific occupation or career.
- The occupation is one that provides an apprentice with a starting wage of half what a professional earns at that business performing the same tasks.
- It includes a wage progression scale whereby the individual’s wages are increased, given successful job performance, at pre-determined intervals until the individual reaches a professional’s salary.
- It is an occupation or career that is clearly identified and commonly recognized by those throughout an industry.
- It can be learned in a practical way through a structured, systematic program of technical classroom instruction and supervised on-the-job training.

- The occupation requires a minimum of 2000 hours of on-the-job training to learn the necessary skills.
- The occupation requires a recommended 144 hours per year of related technical instruction.

### **STRA Program Student Selection Process**

Students wishing to be considered for STRA Program participation must meet program minimum requirements and complete the STRA Program “**Selection Process**,” a series of activities that will help students learn about apprenticeship training and the available industries, occupations, careers, and specific employers with program openings.

Selection Process activities include the following:

- **Complete the STRA Program Application.**  
This application asks for information from the student and/or parents; information and documentation from the student’s counselor, instructors, and attendance staff person; and personal recommendations. It requires the student to write a short essay regarding his or her interest in pursuing training for a specific occupation or career.
- **Attend a STRA Program Student/Parent Orientation.**  
This activity, typically held in the evening, provides students and parents with more specific program information. The orientation includes a STRA Program overview and breakout sessions conducted by representatives from participating businesses who discuss their training programs and available apprenticeships.
- **Complete a STRA Program Assessment Session.**  
Students must complete a two-hour assessment session during which they complete career exploration activities and are tested in reading and math.
- **Attend Business Tours.**  
Tours are scheduled with specific participating businesses. Students must attend the tour activities associated with the program or occupation for which they are applying.
- **Attend a STRA Program Pre-Interview Workshop.**  
During the two-hour workshop, students learn pre-employment skills such as properly completing an application, resume writing, and successful interviewing techniques. Upon completing the workshop, students assemble a “STRA Program Portfolio” containing the STRA Program Application and documentation, as well as any additional items they would like to include for the employer to review, including a resume, awards or certificates, letters of recommendation, records, transcripts, etc. After completing the workshop and assembling a portfolio, students may then choose three employers and sign up to interview with them.

- **Participate in the STRA Interview Event.**  
Students interview with employers at the STRA Program Interview Event, where, on one specific day, representatives from participating businesses interview all interested students who have completed the Selection Process.

Employers then make their selection based on a student's program application information, portfolio items, and interview performance.

Any student who meets program minimum requirements may apply and participate in the Selection Process. However, only those students who have completed all Selection Process activities are allowed to interview. This "self-attrition" system allows students to drop out of the process at any time by not attending an activity. It also helps to ensure only the most highly motivated students will be granted the opportunity to interview.

### **STRA Program Student Apprentice Summer and School-Year Activities**

Students selected by employers for apprenticeship training will begin STRA Program activities the summer between their junior and senior years. They will continue classroom and job site training until all program hours are completed (2-5 years). The typical STRA Program activity schedule includes the following:

#### **Summer Between Junior & Senior Years**

- ❑ When applicable, the student will participate in a 1-2 week classroom safety course.
- ❑ The student will participate in a 6-8 week paid STRA Program Summer Work Experience with the sponsoring employer. The student is registered with the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training as an apprentice for a specific occupation. The bureau monitors the student's classroom and job site training hours until the program is completed.
- ❑ The student's wages start at approximately half what a "professional" earns performing the same job for that specific business.

#### **Senior Year**

- ❑ The student apprentice will participate in occupational instruction during a portion of his or her traditional classroom day.
- ❑ A student apprentice continues paid on-the-job training at the work site.
- ❑ A "Progressive Wage Scale" is utilized, allowing guaranteed wage increases at predetermined intervals, provided the student shows satisfactory progress and performance.

#### **Upon Graduation**

- ❑ Once the student apprentice graduates, he or she continues paid on-the-job training as a full-time employee, receiving wages plus benefits.

- ❑ The student apprentice also continues classroom instruction at the local community college or other post-high school instruction deliverer.
- ❑ In most cases, the employer will pay a portion or all of the tuition and fees.

### **Upon Apprenticeship Completion**

- ❑ The student apprentice must successfully complete all program classroom and on-the-job training hours. This can take 2-5 years depending on the occupation and the employer.
- ❑ When program hours are completed, the student is awarded a “**Certificate of Completion**” from the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, verifying the completion of high-quality occupational or career training. This credential is recognized by those in the industry nationwide.
- ❑ After completing the program and receiving the “Certificate of Completion,” the individual’s wages will be at the company’s professional wage level for the occupation.

### **Program Completion & Nationally Recognized Credentials**

All School-to-Registered Apprenticeship occupational programs require that the student apprentice complete a required number of hours of both **On-the-Job Training** and **Related Technical Instruction**.

- “**On-the-Job Training**” hours are the hours that the student apprentice must spend learning and performing occupational training tasks and duties at the work site. On-the-Job Training hours and tasks are predetermined by the employer. Most STRA occupational programs require from 2000 to 8000 hours of On-the-Job Training, which will take the student apprentice approximately 2-5 years to complete.
- “**Related Technical Instruction**” hours are the hours that the student apprentice must spend in occupational classroom activities. Classes that the student apprentice must successfully complete are predetermined by the employer. The Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training recommends that student apprentices spend a minimum of 144 hours per year in classroom instruction activities.

Once all **On-the-Job Training** hours and **Related Technical Instruction** hours are completed, the student apprentice is awarded a “**Certificate of Completion**” issued by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. These credentials identify the bearer as one who has completed high-quality education and training for the occupation and is a highly skilled, competent professional in the industry.

A **Certificate of Completion** is considered by many industry professionals to be one of the most valued credentials, because it certifies that the individual has completed both hands-on training and classroom education for a specific occupation. Those who possess a Certificate of Completion earn, on average, about the same wage or more than those with a master’s degree from an accredited college or university. In addition, many go on to pursue bachelor’s and

master's degrees, providing continuous, lifelong education, training, employment, and career opportunities.

### **Career Pathways: Apprenticeable Careers and Occupations**

Currently, there are more than 800 occupations and careers that are “apprenticeable.” That is, there are already more than 800 occupations in which a student can use formal apprenticeship training to learn and master the skills and tasks of that occupation, and, upon program completion, receive a Certificate of Completion. Examples include Paralegal, Auto Mechanic, Computer Operator, Child Care Development Specialist, Dental Assistant, Chef, Die Maker, Electrician, Field Engineer, Machinist, Medical Lab Technician, Roofer, X-ray Equipment Tester, and Firefighter. Each year, more occupations and careers are added to the list. All occupational or career programs are approved and registered with the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training.

### **Career Pathways and Apprenticeable Careers and Occupations**

In an effort to help students research, explore, and understand the many different occupational and career options available, the state of Michigan has adopted the **Career Pathway** system. Like the apprenticeship system of training, Career Pathways helps create a well-defined “path” of education and training activities leading to a specific occupation or career goal. The Pathway System provides organization, direction, and focus for students’ learning experiences. It also encourages students to remain “goal oriented” and gives purpose and meaning to learning, making school classes more relevant and interesting.

The Career Pathway system recognizes six Career Pathways. They include:

- ❑ Arts & Communications
- ❑ Business, Management, Marketing, & Technology
- ❑ Engineering, Manufacturing, & Industrial Technology
- ❑ Health Sciences
- ❑ Human Services
- ❑ Natural Resources & Agriscience

Career Pathways, along with Michigan’s **Career Preparation System**, work to assist students in exploring different occupations and careers, making informed and educated career choices, and selecting the education and training opportunities that will best help them reach their career goal.

STRA Programs offer formal, structured, and organized education and training opportunities for many different occupations and careers represented in each of the six Career Pathways. For many occupations, apprenticeship training may be the only formal education and training option available. For others, apprenticeship training may be one of several education and training opportunities, but most likely the only formal program combining both on-the-job training and classroom instruction.

Apprenticeship programs, including STRA Programs, must include:

- A Work Process Schedule – a list of all on-the-job training tasks and skills to be learned, and the number of hours that will be spent learning and mastering each skill
- Related Technical Instruction – a list of occupational classes or courses that must be successfully completed
- A Progressive Wage Scale – including the starting wage, the ending wage, and the schedule of wage increases based upon the number of hours completed.

Listed below are just a few examples of apprenticeable occupations from each of the six Career Pathways. There are more than 800 occupational and career training programs. STRA Programs provide students with the structured, formal education and training needed to successfully pursue and complete a Career Path.

<b>Arts &amp; Communications</b>	<b>Business, Management, Marketing &amp; Technology</b>	<b>Engineering, Manufacturing, and Industrial Technology</b>
Chef Hotel Associate Graphic Designer Commercial Drafter Floral Designer	Computer Technician Computer Operator Web Designer Keyboard Operator Programmer	Residential Wiring Machinist Carpenter Auto Technician Electrician
<b>Health Sciences</b>	<b>Human Services</b>	<b>Natural Resources &amp; Agriscience</b>
Emergency Medical Technician Lab Technician Optician Nurse	Paralegal Counselor Private Investigator Child Development Specialist	Environmental Analyst Landscape Technician Greenskeeper Meteorologist Logger

### **STRA and Michigan's Career Preparation System**

**Michigan's Career Preparation System** serves to ensure that all students participate in career exploration and preparation activities. The STRA Program provides student participants with occupational and career exploration activities, as well as offers a well-defined and predetermined pathway to occupational goal and career achievement.

While high school graduates may have a variety of post-high school plans and engage in a number of activities, one thing remains certain. At some point, **all students will need to secure employment**. Significant changes in the labor market have prompted those in education to re-examine the current education system, focusing on the need for students to develop strong academic, technical, and employability skills.



- ❑ Businesses want employees who have good core academics; quality, up-to-date skill training; and a commitment to life-long learning.
- ❑ They also want individuals who are well prepared for the work world, possessing the attitude, motivation, and critical employability skills and abilities that will ensure their success.

Conducting career research and exploration, making informed career choices, and being properly prepared for a specific career are essential. We can no longer assume that a college degree will ensure personally rewarding, gainful employment. Individuals must possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities employers require.

Michigan's Career Preparation System initiative, announced by Governor John Engler in 1997, provides students in grades K-12 with the opportunity to explore a variety of different careers, as well the education, skills, and guidance that will prepare them for continued education, training, employment, and career opportunities.

Career Preparation Goals include:

1. Ensure career preparation is fully integrated into the Michigan education system.
2. Ensure that all students, with their parents, will be prepared to make informed choices about their careers.
3. Ensure that all students have the types and levels of skills, knowledge, and performance valued and required for their education and career choices.

Components of the Career Preparation System include:

- ✓ Academic Preparation
- ✓ Career Development
- ✓ Workplace Readiness
- ✓ Education and Training Options

Each of the above components collectively interact, producing a system in which student achievement and successful entry into a career of choice is the primary objective.

### **The STRA Program and Michigan's Career Preparation System**

The School-to-Registered Apprenticeship Program plays a very important role in assisting Michigan schools in obtaining the goals of the Career Preparation System.

STRA Program Consortium members and business, education, and community program supporters are dedicated to working with the private sector to:

- Expand opportunities for high school youth to receive occupational, career education, and technical skill training by participating in registered apprenticeship programs.
- Help fill the private sector's need for a properly prepared, skill-trained workforce.

With these directives, STRA Program goals, objectives, and activities directly align with the stated outcomes of Michigan's Career Preparation initiative. These aligned goals include:

- ❑ Developing STRA Programs as an essential component of any integrated, career decision-making, career preparation system for youth.
- ❑ Creating STRA Programs that will make a significant impact by helping to meet the private sector's need for a skilled workforce.
- ❑ Providing a series of employment and career preparation activities designed to provide student candidates with industry and occupational data to assist them in making appropriate, educated, and informed career choices. These activities, known collectively as the **STRA Program Selection Process**, are required to be completed by any student wishing to be interviewed by participating employers. Selection Process activities include:
  - Program Application Completion, including documentation of grades, attendance, and core academic level
  - Student and parent attendance at a STRA Program Orientation
  - Participation in Occupational Assessment
  - Participation in Business Tours
  - Attendance and participation in a STRA Program Pre-Interview Workshop
  - Participation in STRA Program Interviews
  - Possible drug test and/or physical
  - Classroom instruction and on-the-job training as a means of guaranteeing complete, high-quality, up-to-date occupational or career education and training
- ❑ Providing a long-term, formal, and structured education and training plan that includes both high school and post-high school training activities, including employer-paid, post-high school classroom instruction at the local community college
- ❑ Providing guaranteed, full-time employment, including wages and benefits, to graduating seniors.
- ❑ Providing program completers with nationally recognized credentials ensuring lifelong education, training, and employment opportunities.

Everyone will need to become a part of the workforce at some time in life. Being prepared and planning in advance will help ensure that a student's occupational and career goals are achieved. Michigan's Career Preparation System and the School-to-Registered Apprenticeship Program can assist in ensuring that students graduate from high school well prepared, highly motivated, and ready to reach their advanced education, training, occupational, and career goals.

### **Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit**

Employers who participate in the School-to-Registered Apprenticeship (STRA) Program qualify for a \$2000 Single Business Tax credit per student, per year. The tax credit was established to assist employers with the costs of educating and training students in an apprenticeship program while the student is still in high school.

The credit covers 50 percent of the wage-related costs of the apprentice, including salary, fringe benefits, and other payroll expenses. It also covers 100 percent of classroom instruction costs, including tuition, fees, and books for college-level courses taken while the apprentice is enrolled in high school.

### **Tax Credit Eligibility**

- An apprentice must be registered with the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training.
- The occupational program of the business must be registered with the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training.
- The apprentice must be enrolled in high school or a GED preparation program and be 16-19 years old.
- The occupational program must be at least 4000 hours in length.
- Employers must submit a copy of the student's approved apprenticeship agreement with their Single Business Tax return.

For more information regarding the Single Business Tax credit, employers should speak with their business accountant and/or call the Michigan Department of Career Development at (517)244-4000 (voice) or 1-888-605-6722 (TTY) and ask about the STRA Program tax credit.

### **Education Training Programs and Youth Labor Laws**

**Note: Information in this section has been taken from the School-to-Registered Apprenticeship (STRA) Program Employer Handbook, Part 2, chapters 1-7, and Part 3, chapters 1-5, and is excerpted from "A Guide to Work-Based Learning, Business and Industry Risk Management Plan," 1996. The STRA Employer Handbook is available to all Michigan employers participating in the STRA Program. You can obtain a copy by contacting Tim Jackson, MCCTE, Michigan State University, (517) 432-4388.**

The STRA Program is one of several "work-based" learning opportunities available to Michigan high school students. While work-based learning has many benefits, many employers have concerns regarding local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines for employing youth, including:

- ❑ Student's age
- ❑ Time of day and number of hours the student may work
- ❑ Duties or tasks the student may perform
- ❑ Equipment the student may operate
- ❑ Paperwork, documentation, monitoring, and evaluation

## REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Work-based learning programs, in which students learn at the work site, are governed by local, state, and federal regulations. These regulations set the standards for schools, agencies, and employers. The primary laws regulating youth employment include:

- **Federal Fair Labor Standards Act**
- **Michigan Youth Employment Standards Act**
- **Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act**

### Federal Fair Labor Standards Act

Provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage Hour Division are meant to:

1. Protect the educational opportunities of minors.
2. Prohibit the employment of minors in certain jobs under certain conditions that could hurt or harm their health or well-being.
3. Establish minimum ages for general and specific types of employment.
4. Regulate the number of hours and times of day that a minor under 16 years of age may work.
5. Prohibit minors from working in hazardous employment activities.
6. Allow 16 and 17 year olds to work in some hazardous employment activities **if they are part of an approved occupational cooperative education or registered apprenticeship program**.
7. Pay minors at least minimum wage.

### Federal Child Labor Bulletin

Students under 18 may not be employed in hazardous occupations, as listed in Michigan's Youth Employment Standards, 1988, and Federal Child Labor Bulletin 101. Minors may perform all work, except in 17 occupations considered too hazardous for youth under 18. **Under certain conditions 16- and 17-year-old apprentices and student learners may be exempt from Hazardous Occupations 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 17:**

HO 5: Work using power-driven wood working machines, including the use of saws at construction sites.

HO 8: Work using power-driven metal forming, punching, and shearing machines. (Permits the use of large groups of machine tools used on metal, including lathes, turning machines, milling machines, grinding, boring machines, and planing machines).

HO 10: Work involving slaughtering or meat-packing, processing, or rendering, including the operation of power-driven meat slicers in retail stores.

HO 12: Work using power-driven paper-products machines, including the operation and loading of paper balers in grocery stores.

HO 14: Work involved in the use of circular saws, band saws, and guillotine shears.

HO 16: All work in roofing operations.

HO 17: Work in excavating, including work in a trench as a plumber.

Exemptions from the above Hazardous Occupations for minors 16 and 17 years of age require the student be enrolled in the appropriate and approved career and technical education program under written agreement under the following conditions:

- ✓ Hazardous work is incidental to the training.
- ✓ Hazardous work is intermittent and for short periods of time and under the direct and close supervision of an experienced and qualified individual.
- ✓ Safety instructions shall be given by the school and correlated and reinforced by the employer during on-the-job training.
- ✓ Previous training has been given by the school and mastery has been documented for all hazardous order duties listed on the training agreement.

A written training agreement and training plan must be completed and signed by the student, parents, employer, and program coordinator, and a copy kept at the work site and on file with the program coordinator.

### **Michigan Youth Employment Standards Act**

The Michigan Youth Employment Standards Act and Youth Employment Standards rules adhere closely to federal provisions, but also include additional, more restrictive provisions:

- ✓ Work permits and age certificates are required in Michigan for working minors.
- ✓ Numbers of hours and times of day that 16- and 17-year-old minors may work are regulated.
- ✓ Stricter standards exist in construction, manufacturing, and health care occupations.
- ✓ Exemptions are allowed for student learners under a contract or training agreement, but provisions for federal child labor laws must still be met.
- ✓ “Deviations” are allowed for some restricted work and for the times of day that 16- and 17-year-olds may work.

### **Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act**

The purpose of Michigan’s Occupational Safety and Health Act is to assure every working person a safe and healthful working environment and to preserve human resources. Occupational health rules and regulations require specific conditions in the workplace or the use of specific practices, methods, or processes to promote safe work. **Employers are responsible for becoming familiar with standards applicable to their establishments and for ensuring a safe work environment.**

## Other Regulations

Other laws and regulations also impact the design of work-based learning:

- Michigan's minimum wage law does not apply to minors under 18. **However, federal minimum wage laws do apply.**
- Various occupational licensing provisions or codes (for auto mechanics, nurses, etc.) allow minors to train under special conditions, restrict training, or limit work hours.
- Related instruction and supervision by a certified staff member is required for a student at a work site if the student is to be counted toward a school district's membership count.

## Risk Management

**Note: Information in this section has been taken from the School-to-Registered Apprenticeship (STRA) Program Employer Handbook, Part 2, chapters 1-7 and Part 3, chapters 1-5, and is excerpted from "A Guide to Work-Based Learning, Business and Industry Risk Management Plan," 1996. The STRA Program Employer Handbook is available to all Michigan employers who are participating in the STRA Program. You can obtain a copy by contacting Tim Jackson at MCCTE, Michigan State University, (517) 432-4388.**

There are risks involved in everything that business and industry undertakes, and training youth in the workplace can introduce additional risks. This is why employers considering participation in a work-based program such as the STRA Program consider risk and liability a primary issue.

There are several factors or situations specific to youth which call for extra caution to be exercised to manage these additional risks:

- Youth often work part-time jobs, often after putting in a full day at school.
- Many industries that employ a large number of youth (such as food service, retail, and manufacturing) have a higher-than-average injury rate for all workers.
- Child labor laws provide limited protection, and employers must be well informed about these laws and adapt their hiring and supervision practices in order to be in compliance.
- Youth are inexperienced and unfamiliar with work tasks, operation of equipment, workplace hazards, and their rights as workers.
- Youth are more reluctant to ask questions or make demands of employers, and may try to complete tasks that they are unprepared to do or incapable of doing safely.
- Studies have shown that youth generally don't receive adequate occupational health and safety instruction, either in school or on the job.

## **How to Manage the Risks: A Risk Management Plan**

The purpose of developing a Risk Management Plan is to:

- Identify potential risks
- Develop plans to prevent accidental injury or damage
- Reduce the risk of legal accountability

### **Risk Control Guidelines**

Risk control guidelines are those policies and procedures that attempt to control the frequency and severity of physical injury or property damage loss. Parties involved in work-based learning programs need to jointly develop risk management plans. Most schools have procedures and policies for field trips, cooperative education, and STRA Programs, and other program guidelines that could be adapted into a comprehensive plan to serve all parties.

### **Results of a Risk Management Plan**

**The following are suggested as key results of a risk management plan:**

1. Student participants know what is expected of them.
2. Roles and responsibilities of all parties (student, parent, employer, coordinator, etc.) must be identified and communicated to all involved.
3. Student participants know how to perform their assigned duties and are able to perform them properly and safely.
4. Participants know when and how to report problems or suggest changes.
5. Programs must be designed, developed, administered, and operated with due care to foresee dangers to students and comply with federal and state employment laws.

### **Legal Duties**

**The following strategies will reduce liability exposure and demonstrate a commitment to a safe and healthful work environment:**

- ❑ The greater the possibility of injury, the greater the efforts should be to assure safety.
- ❑ Risks should be brought to the attention of all parties involved (students, parents, supervisors, school staff, etc.).
- ❑ The degree of care required and needed for close and direct supervision increases as age, maturity, and abilities of students involved decrease.
- ❑ The degree of care required and the need for close and direct supervision increase at the worksite when participants are performing hazardous work.
- ❑ Emergencies should not be aggravated by indecision or a lack of procedures to handle any reasonably expected injury.

### **Insurance Coverage**

Adequate insurance coverage for any type of work-based learning program can be arranged by working with an agent or broker who is familiar with these programs and with the schools or agencies who may be parties to these programs. You will first wish to assess the extent to which present policies provide sufficient protection and the need for obtaining additional coverage for any unprotected risk.

The following represent the types of insurance coverage necessary to cover the activities in work-based learning:

- ✓ **Injury to Participants:** Participants injured at the worksite may need medical attention. If they are considered “employees” under the Workers’ Disability Compensation Act, expenses will ordinarily be paid by the sponsoring companies’ workers’ compensation policy. For student/visitors, volunteers, or certain unpaid trainees, expenses are usually paid by the injured person’s (or parents’) health insurance. The “medical payments”

provision of the company's general liability policy would also provide similar coverage for non-employee participants.

- ✓ **Coverage of Lawsuits:** A sponsoring company's general liability policy pays claims and provides legal defense against most types of suits brought against a company and its employees, but such policies do not usually cover student/visitors, volunteers, or certain unpaid trainees unless amendments extend the coverage to include these individuals.
- ✓ **Workers' Compensation in Michigan:** The purpose of the Workers' Disability Compensation Act is to provide coverage to employees when they sustain injuries that arise out of, and in the course of, employment. Employers are required to carry workers' compensation insurance when they have one full-time or three part-time employees. Paid cooperative education and school-to-registered apprenticeship participants would be covered under the Workers' Disability Compensation Act.

### **Liability Shields**

Liability shields are used to assign responsibility from a business to another person or organization in the event of an accident or property damage, and are used to protect the finances of the company and good will in the community. The four common liability shields include:

- ✓ **Waivers:** Waivers are documents in which participants sign away their right to bring a lawsuit in the event of injury or damage. Waivers are not effective tools to use in working with young people because courts seldom allow them to excuse negligence or a duty owed a minor.
- ✓ **Consent Forms:** "Informed" consent forms are documents that apprise the participants (and parents) of the risks involved in the activity that he/she is about to perform. Participants sign the document indicating that they understand the risks and agree not to bring a lawsuit for any harm resulting from identified risks. Consent forms are generally upheld by the courts, but don't excuse a company from responsibilities for its own negligence.
- ✓ **Permission Slips:** Permission slips are documents that inform parents about the nature, location, and details of an activity. Permission slips are helpful as a form of protection to a company in that a well-informed parent may not be as likely to bring a lawsuit. They are used most to inform parents about field trips and/or job shadowing events.
- ✓ **Indemnification Agreements:** Indemnification agreements are used to shift financial burden for injuries from one party to another. The organization that signs the agreement must have both an insurance policy and the proper funds to honor the commitment to indemnify. Legal counsel or risk management representatives should be consulted before signing an indemnification agreement.